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Judicial Council to Hold Public Business Meeting on Friday, June 24

Reports on Trial Court Budget, Audits, ADR to Be Considered; Resolution to Honor African American Justices

San Francisco—The Judicial Council of California will hold a public business meeting from 8:30 a.m. to 12:40 p.m. on Friday, June 24, in the Hiram Johnson State Office Building, Judicial Council Conference Center, Third Floor, 455 Golden Gate Avenue, San Francisco, California 94102.

Council members will consider reports on trial court cost increases, alternate dispute resolution, trial court audits, and uniform fees for telephone appearances. In addition, the council will consider a resolution honoring African-American justices for their contributions to the judicial system.

Chaired by Chief Justice Tani Cantil-Sakauye, the council is the administrative policymaking body of the California courts. The meeting will be audiocast live on the California Courts website at <http://www.courts.ca.gov/policyadmin-jc.htm>. Meeting materials are now available at <http://www.courts.ca.gov/age20110624.pdf>. The discussion agenda includes the following reports.

Trial Court Budget: The Trial Court Budget Working Group will present a recommendation to allocate \$17.862 million to address current fiscal year cost increases in court employee retirement, retiree health, and health benefits. The funds would be allocated to courts on a pro rata basis.

ADR Programs: The Office of General Counsel of the Administrative Office of the Courts (AOC) will present a recommendation to use part of the Judicial Administration Efficiency and Modernization Fund (Mod Fund) allocated for alternative dispute resolution projects to increase funding for Civil Mediation and Settlement Programs in 10 courts. In addition, the funds would be used to produce a video to promote and facilitate the use of court-connected mediation programs for civil harassment cases.

Trial Court Audit Reports: The Advisory Committee on Financial Accountability and Efficiency for the Judicial Branch (A&E) will recommend that the Judicial Council accept two audit reports that pertain to the Superior Courts of San Francisco and Tehama Counties. This complies with the policy approved by the council on August 27, 2010, which specifies council acceptance of audit reports as the last step to finalization of the reports, before their placement on the California Courts public website to facilitate public access.

As part of its consent agenda, the council also will consider 8 other audit reports concerning the Superior Courts of Colusa, Lassen, Merced, Plumas, San Mateo (two reports), Santa Cruz, and Shasta Counties. Acceptance and publication of audit reports are designed to enhance accountability and provide the courts with information to minimize financial, compliance, and operational risk.

Telephone Appearances: The AOC Office of General Counsel will present recommendations to amend rules of court to establish a uniform telephone appearance fee, a late fee, and a cancellation fee to be charged by vendors and courts for parties and their attorneys to appear by telephone at court hearings, conferences, and proceedings in civil cases. The amendments are required by Senate Bill 857, the 2010 judicial-branch related budget trailer bill.

Judicial Council Resolution: The AOC will recommend that the Judicial Council commend the significant achievements of African-American justices who have served, or are serving, on the California Supreme Court and California Courts of Appeal. Recognizing their achievements this year is especially important since 2011 marks the 70th anniversary of the appointment of California's first African-American judge and the 50th anniversary of the appointment of California's first African-American justice.

The Judicial Council's consent agenda includes several items recommended by various committees and working groups for action by the council. These include approval of a report on court security plans for submission to the Legislature, approval of additions and revisions to civil jury instructions, and approval of revisions to the Uniform Bail and Penalty Schedules. A fifth item on the consent agenda is an interim report from the council's Court-Ordered Debt Task Force that requires no action.

Two additional items on the agenda are information only: the Trial Court Quarterly Investment Report for the period January 1 through March 31, 2011, and a notice from the Superior Court of Siskiyou County on reduced clerk's office hours. Under Government Code section 68106, trial courts are required to notify the public and the council before closing offices or reducing hours.

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The Judicial Council is the policymaking body of the California courts, the largest court system in the nation. Under the leadership of the Chief Justice and in accordance with the California Constitution, the council is responsible for ensuring the consistent, independent, impartial, and accessible administration of justice. The Administrative Office of the Courts carries out the official actions of the council and ensures leadership and excellence in court administration.